

# SENATE RECORD VOTE ANALYSIS

106th Congress  
1st Session

Vote No. 293

September 27, 1999, 5:50 p.m.  
Page S-11490 Temp. Record

## EMPOWERING SCHOOLS AND PARENTS/Passage

**SUBJECT:** A resolution supporting continued progress in returning authority over children's education to State and local school officials and to parents . . . S. Res. 186. Passage.

### ACTION: RESOLUTION AGREED TO, 51-42

**SYNOPSIS:** As introduced and passed, S. Res. 186 will express the sense of the Senate that the 106th Congress has taken strong steps to reform our Nation's education system and to give States, local schools, and parents more flexibility and authority over their children's education. It will also express the sense of the Senate that the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) will enable this Congress to continue its efforts to send decision-making back to the States, local schools, and families. The resolution will make numerous findings, including the following: the fiscal year 2000 budget proposed a \$28 billion increase for education over 5 years and an \$82 billion increase over 10 years, and gave the Department of Education a \$2.4 billion increase this year (which is twice the increase requested by the President); Congress passed the ESEA earlier this year, which frees States and local communities to tailor education programs to meet the individual needs of students and local schools; since Republicans became the majority party in Congress, Federal education funding has increased by 27 percent; Republicans increased disabilities education funding by 80 percent in the past 3 years even though President Clinton requested only a .07 increase over that same time period for disabilities education; Congress supports efforts to recruit, retrain, and retain high quality teachers; Congress supports efforts which rely on proven methods of instruction and opposes the use of unproven methods; Congress supports increasing the number of education choices parents have for their children; Congress supports giving schools the help needed to protect teachers and students; and Congress supports efforts to increase the ability of local schools, teachers and parents to tailor their curriculum in order to meet the unique needs of their children and to increase the achievement of all students.

**Those favoring passage contended:**

Since we Republicans have been in control in Congress, we have been slowly but surely reforming the Federal Government's approach to public education. Democrats have resisted our efforts, arguing instead for more money to increase Federal bureaucratic

(See other side)

YEAS (51)		NAYS (42)		NOT VOTING (7)	
Republicans (51 or 100%)	Democrats (0 or 0%)	Republicans (0 or 0%)	Democrats (42 or 100%)	Republicans (4)	Democrats (3)
Abraham	Hutchison	Akaka	Inouye	Bunning <sup>-2</sup>	Kohl <sup>-2</sup>
Allard	Inhofe	Baucus	Johnson	Chafee <sup>-2</sup>	Leahy <sup>-2AN</sup>
Ashcroft	Jeffords	Bayh	Kennedy	Hagel <sup>-2</sup>	Torricelli <sup>-2</sup>
Bennett	Kyl	Biden	Kerrey	McCain <sup>-2</sup>	
Bond	Lott	Bingaman	Kerry		
Brownback	Lugar	Boxer	Landrieu		
Burns	Mack	Breaux	Lautenberg		
Campbell	McConnell	Bryan	Levin		
Cochran	Murkowski	Byrd	Lieberman		
Collins	Nickles	Cleland	Lincoln		
Coverdell	Roberts	Conrad	Mikulski		
Craig	Roth	Daschle	Moynihan		
Crapo	Santorum	Dodd	Murray		
DeWine	Sessions	Dorgan	Reed		
Domenici	Shelby	Durbin	Reid		
Enzi	Smith, Bob (I)	Edwards	Robb		
Fitzgerald	Smith, Gordon	Feingold	Rockefeller		
Frist	Snowe	Feinstein	Sarbanes		
Gorton	Specter	Graham	Schumer		
Gramm	Stevens	Harkin	Wellstone		
Grams	Thomas	Hollings	Wyden		
Grassley	Thompson				
Gregg	Thurmond				
Hatch	Voinovich				
Helms	Warner				
Hutchinson					

#### EXPLANATION OF ABSENCE:

1—Official Business  
2—Necessarily Absent  
3—Illness  
4—Other

#### SYMBOLS:

AY—Announced Yea  
AN—Announced Nay  
PY—Paired Yea  
PN—Paired Nay

control over the Nation's public schools. Their approach is to ignore all of the old, underfunded Federal education programs that are burdening local school systems and to instead add new Federal programs. The Republican approach to education is far different. Republicans believe in increasing funding for current Federal commitments before assuming new responsibilities, reducing costly Federal mandates and paperwork requirements on States and local schools, giving more authority to local schools and parents over how their children are taught, and radically reforming current Federal education programs so that success will be based not on whether the money was spent as demanded by the Government but on whether the results sought were actually achieved.

The two resolutions before us (see vote No. 294 for the vote on the Democrat resolution) perfectly illustrate the two parties' differing approaches to education. The Republican resolution outlines the progress that has been made in the last few years in improving education (since Republicans have been in control of Congress, student performance has finally begun to improve) and it outlines the types of actions that should be taken to continue that progress. The Federal Government has nearly 800 Federal education programs. For the past several decades, each time a Member of Congress has had the bright idea of starting a new program and putting his or her name on it Congress has happily complied. To pay for the new efforts, which almost always have duplicated multiple existing efforts, it has underfunded old programs. The end result of this process is that we are now stuck with hundreds of programs with lots of requirements and little funding. Federal funds make up only 4 percent of schools' budgets, but Federal program requirements are responsible for more than half of schools' administrative paperwork costs. Even worse, those requirements come with mandates that control how the money is spent and end up controlling how local schools spend their own money. Those mandates stifle innovation. This resolution properly notes that Republicans have increased education funding by 27 percent since taking control of Congress and that they have concentrated on funding existing commitments such as to pay the promised share of disabilities education costs. In recognition of the fact that just adding money is clearly not the solution, it also notes the progress that it has made in freeing local schools from layers of Federal mandates, and it expresses support for further empowering principals, teachers, and parents so that they, rather than Federal bureaucrats, can make education decisions for their children.

Congress will soon reauthorize the ESEA. We Republicans look forward to the debate on that bill. It is our intent to give States a new option for up to 21 of the ESEA's 47 programs. The Federal Government currently ignores the results of its ESEA programs. All of its efforts are set up to make certain that States and local school districts spend any money given according to very detailed rules. In other words, the Federal Government is concerned only with the process. A program that totally fails to meet its purpose (for instance, a literacy program that produces only illiterate children) is rated a great success by the Government if the recipients of the money have spent it exactly as they were told. Our proposal will be to let States, on a cafeteria basis, decide which, if any, of those 21 programs for which they would like to get funding with performance requirements instead of process requirements. The Federal Government would not tell the States what results they would have to achieve; each State would be in charge of setting its goals according to its own unique needs. The Federal Government would then give funding and would measure results.

Since we Republicans have controlled Congress, the Labor-Health and Human Services-Education Appropriations Bill has been one of the last appropriations bills considered each session. Democrats, in a fine piece of revisionist history, have suggested that its late consideration shows that Republicans do not believe education funding is a high priority. We remind Democrats that they filibustered any attempt to even bring the bill up throughout the 104th Congress. They, not Republicans, have been reluctant to allow the bill to be considered. It has been shoved into omnibus appropriations bills at the ends of years because Democrats have fought for that result on the theory that they can get more money with less scrutiny on omnibus bills.

In sum, we reject the Democrats' tired solutions of more money and more programs. In this case, some increase is warranted because the problems are so extreme, but we also understand that money is not enough--real reforms are needed to cut Federal mandates, increase parental and local school authority, and focus on results rather than process. This Republican resolution recognizes the progress that has been made in these areas and supports further reforms. We are pleased to vote for its adoption.

**Those opposing passage contended:**

This Republican resolution grossly distorts history and then ends by blandly noting that it is the sense of the Senate that when the ESEA is reauthorized Congress will be able to increase local decision-making authority. While it is true that education funding has gone up by 27 percent since Republicans have been in control in Congress, that statistic is wildly misleading, because it is also true that the first thing that Republicans did on gaining control of Congress was to rescind previously approved education funding. Each year thereafter they have increased education funding grudgingly to give the bare minimum possible without provoking a veto. To then brag about giving increases that they did not want to give takes a lot of gall. As for the notion of expanding local control of education they will not get any argument from us. We recognize that public education is primarily a local responsibility. However, we also think that the Federal Government should continue, as it always has, to provide education assistance in targeted areas where it can be shown a large need exists that is not being met. Our Republican colleagues seem willing to abandon any Federal role--they reject specific Democratic proposals to increase funding for hiring teachers, repairing schools, and paying for afterschool programs. Basically, we think that this resolution is just an attempt to cover up the fact that Republicans are not all that interested in improving education in America. Each year since they have been in control of Congress education has been one of the last funding issues they have been willing to consider. We urge our colleagues to reject this resolution and to vote for the Democrat resolution to follow.